



**CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE**  
Advocacy Camp 2012

## Talk Back! Write a Letter to the Editor

The Letters section of any newspaper is often found on the same page as the editorials – usually the most read page of your local paper. Letters express the diverse viewpoints of the paper's readers. They help the media more fully represent the community it covers.

**Letters to the editor are important tools for advocates like you.** They are a great way to sustain – and expand – the conversation initiated in a news story, editorial or opinion piece. A letter to the editor can:

1. Give voice to a perspective that the initial story may have missed;
2. Reinforce a point presented in that story;
3. Thank someone, e.g. a public official or state agency, for doing the right thing – which helps ensure they'll keep it up!
4. Call out someone for failing to do the right thing – and ask for better.

Here are some general guidelines for writing a letter to the editor:

- Keep it timely: talk about something happening now
- Respond to a recent story printed in the paper. This is the single best way to increase the odds that your letter will be printed
- Keep it short: Most papers only print letters that are 200 words or fewer, or about 3-4 paragraphs
- Tell your story or the story of your family, workplace or community
- Speak your mind: the best letters come from the heart
- Add your name, address, email, and daytime phone number
- Please label with “letter to the editor”
- If you're not responding to a story printed in a particular paper, it is okay to send the same letter to more than one paper

To see a list of newspapers in your area, go to the Washington Secretary of State's web site: [http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/wa\\_newspapers.aspx](http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/wa_newspapers.aspx).

Children's Alliance staff are happy to support you in this work. Contact us with any questions or concerns.

Adam Hyla, Communications Director:  
206-324-0340 ext. 18 or  
[adam@childrensalliance.org](mailto:adam@childrensalliance.org)



## Letters to the Editor

Your views in 250 words or less

### HEALTH: State needs mid-level dental professionals

Letter by Richard Smaby, Tacoma on March 25, 2013 at 11:40 am | [View 1 comment](#)

The News Tribune [editorial](#) (3-18) on making dental care more affordable to the poor and those on Medicaid was convincing. Washington state has the opportunity to improve the health of its citizens and receive federal funds to do so. Everyone benefits, when more of us are healthy.

Most of the arguments in the editorial also apply to approving Senate Bill 5433 (House Bill 1516) to create the category of mid-level dental professional: "Abscesses turn . . . into massive bacterial infections . . . Gum disease, untreated, wreaks havoc on diabetics. Without dental care, researchers have found that people suffer higher rates of kidney and heart disease, stroke and blindness."

People in Alaska and Minnesota get excellent routine and preventive dental care from mid-level dental professionals. Washington colleges want to educate these new providers. Dentists who care for our communities are ready to put them to work.

Dozens of organizations endorse legislation to bring the practice to Washington. However, the Washington State Dental Association is lobbying against it.

In the long term, all dental providers stand to gain as more people seek dental care. I ask readers to reread the editorial, talk to their dentists and explain why everyone benefits from making dental care more affordable. Then they should ask them to let the WSDA know they support Senate Bill 5433.